

## CLAIMS

[9000] We claim:

1 1: A method of point-of-sale activation and subsequent registration of products, said  
2 method comprising the steps of:

- 3 (a) providing a package by which a product, being unactivated prior to sale, is sold  
4 at a point-of-sale, said product having an activation code and said package  
5 having a PIN;  
6 (b) providing computer data storage apparatus within which said activation code is  
7 associated with said PIN;  
8 (c) transmitting said activation code over a first communications channel from said  
9 point-of-sale to said computer data storage apparatus; then,  
10 (d) having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been  
11 activated and may be used to register said product; then,  
12 (e) registering said product by transmitting said PIN over a second communications  
13 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 2: The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- 2 (a) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk  
3 being in communication with said computer data storage apparatus over said  
4 first communications channel, said kiosk including a PIN applicator for  
5 applying said PIN to said package; then,  
6 (b) applying said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator; then,  
7 (c) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk;  
8 said package having said PIN subsequent to vending of said package by said kiosk but not  
9 having said PIN prior to application of said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator.

1           3: The method as recited in claim 2, in which said PIN applicator is a printer.

1           4: The method as recited in claim 2, in which said PIN applicator applies a label to  
2 said package, said label having said PIN thereon.

1           5: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said step of registering said product  
2 further includes, after said transmitting of said PIN over said second communications  
3 channel, the step of receiving an unlocking code for said product over said second  
4 communications channel from said computer data storage apparatus.

1           6: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package includes a URL via which  
2 said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second communications  
3 channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

4           (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;  
5           and

6           (b) providing a communications program on said computer;  
7 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said  
8 PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:

9           (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and

10          (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said  
11 second communications channel via said URL.

1           7: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said computer data storage apparatus is  
2 interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said step  
3 of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over said  
4 second communications channel, the steps of:

5           (a) providing a telephone; and

6           (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio  
7 recognition means over said second communications channel;

8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said  
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

1           8: The method as recited in claim 7, in which said telephone includes audio tone  
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic  
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second  
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

5           (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic  
6 dialing tones representing said PIN; and

7           (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic  
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1           9: The method as recited in claim 7, in which audio recognition means is an IVR, and  
2 said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes the  
3 steps of:

4           (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and

5           (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

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1           10: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package includes said activation  
2 code and said activation code is machine-readable, and said method further includes the steps  
3 of:

- 4           (a) providing an activation code reading apparatus at said point-of-sale; and,  
5           (b) prior to transmitting said activation code over said first communications  
6 channel, reading said activation code using said activation code reading  
7 apparatus when said product is sold at said point-of-sale.

1           11: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes a magnetic  
2 strip onto which said activation code is encoded, and said activation code reading apparatus  
3 is a magnetic strip reader.

1           12: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said activation code is optically  
2 readable, and said activation code reading apparatus is an optical scanner.

1           13: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes an ICC  
2 element into which said activation code is encoded, and said activation code reading  
3 apparatus is an ICC interface apparatus.

1 14: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package obscures said PIN from  
2 viewing by a human prior to presentation of said product at said point-of-sale.

1 15: The method as recited in claim 14, in which said package includes a removable  
2 opaque covering and said PIN is obscured by said removable opaque covering.

1 16: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said activation code is on a top  
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 17: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said removable opaque covering is a  
2 scratch-off opaque covering.

1 18: The method as recited in claim 17, in which said activation code is on a top  
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 19: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said removable opaque covering is a  
2 peel-off opaque covering.

1 20: The method as recited in claim 19, in which said activation code is on a top  
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1           21: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said step of registering said product  
2 includes the steps of:

3           (a) providing an PIN-reading apparatus; and

4           (b) reading said PIN using said PIN-reading apparatus prior to said transmitting of  
5           said PIN over said second communications channel.

1           22: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes a magnetic  
2 strip onto which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is a magnetic strip  
3 reader.

1           23: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said PIN is optically readable, and  
2 said PIN-reading apparatus is an optical scanner.

1           24: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes an ICC  
2 element into which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is an ICC interface  
3 apparatus.

1           25: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes computer data  
2 storage media onto which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is computer  
3 data storage media reader.

1           26: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said step of registering said product  
2 further includes, after said transmitting of said PIN over said second communications  
3 channel, the step of receiving an unlocking code for said product over said second  
4 communications channel from said computer data storage apparatus.

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1           27: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes a URL via  
2   which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second  
3   communications channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:  
4           (a)   providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;  
5                and  
6           (b)   providing a communications program on said computer;  
7   and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said  
8   PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:  
9           (c)   providing said URL to said communications program; and  
10          (d)   establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said  
11          second communications channel via said URL.

1           28: The method as recited in claim 27, in which said step of registering said product  
2   further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said second  
3   communications channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1           29: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said computer data storage apparatus  
2 is interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said  
3 step of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over  
4 said second communications channel, the steps of:

- 5           (a) providing a telephone; and
- 6           (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio  
7           recognition means over said second communications channel;
- 8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said  
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

1           30: The method as recited in claim 29, in which said telephone includes audio tone  
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic  
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second  
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

- 5           (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic  
6           dialing tones representing said PIN; and
- 7           (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic  
8           dialing tones recognizer.

1           31: The method as recited in claim 29, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,  
2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes  
3 the steps of:

- 4           (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and
- 5           (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.



1           32: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package further includes a  
2 plurality of product registration cards, each said product registration card having a product  
3 registration code thereon, and within said computer data storage apparatus each said product  
4 registration code is associated with said PIN; said step of registering said product by  
5 transmitting said PIN over said second communications channel further comprising the step  
6 of having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been registered and  
7 that each said product registration code may then be accepted; said method further  
8 comprising the steps of, for each said product registration card:

- 9           (a) transmitting its said product registration code over a third communications  
10 channel to said computer data storage apparatus; then,  
11           (b) having said computer data storage apparatus verify that said its said product  
12 registration code may be accepted; then  
13           (c) accepting said product registration code by said computer data storage  
14 apparatus.

1           33: A method of selling products at a point-of-sale with subsequent registration of  
2 said products, said method comprising the steps of:

- 3           (a) providing a computer data storage apparatus remote from said point-of-sale;
- 4           (b) providing a package by which a product, being unactivated prior to sale, is sold  
5           at said point-of-sale;
- 6           (c) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk  
7           being in communication with said computer data storage apparatus over a first  
8           communications channel, said kiosk including a PIN applicator for applying a  
9           PIN to said package;
- 10          (d) transmitting said PIN over said first communications channel and between said  
11          kiosk and said computer data storage apparatus;
- 12          (e) having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been  
13          activated and may be used to register said product;
- 14          (f) applying said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator; then,
- 15          (g) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk; then,
- 16          (h) registering said product by transmitting said PIN over a second communications  
17          channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1           34: The method as recited in claim 33, in which said package includes a URL via  
2           which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second  
3           communications channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

4           (a)   providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;  
5                    and

6           (b)   providing a communications program on said computer;  
7           and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said  
8           PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:

9           (c)   providing said URL to said communications program; and

10          (d)   establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said  
11               second communications channel via said URL.

1           35: The method as recited in claim 34, in which said step of registering said product  
2           further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said second  
3           communications channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1           36: The method as recited in claim 33, in which said computer data storage apparatus  
2 is interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said  
3 step of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over  
4 said second communications channel, the steps of:

- 5           (a) providing a telephone; and  
6           (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio  
7                 recognition means over said second communications channel;  
8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said  
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

1           37: The method as recited in claim 36, in which said telephone includes audio tone  
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic  
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second  
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

- 5           (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic  
6                 dialing tones representing said PIN; and  
7           (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic  
8                 dialing tones recognizer.

1           38: The method as recited in claim 36, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,  
2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes  
3 the steps of:

- 4           (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and  
5           (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 39: A method of selling products at a point-of-sale with subsequent registration of  
2 said products, said method comprising the steps of:

- 3 (a) providing a computer data storage apparatus remote from said point-of-sale;  
4 (b) providing a package by which a product, is sold at said point-of-sale;  
5 (c) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk  
6 including a PIN applicator for applying a PIN to said package, said kiosk and  
7 said computer data storage apparatus both having a set of PINs that may be  
8 vended by said kiosk;  
9 (d) selecting a vended PIN from said set of PINs and applying said vended PIN to  
10 said package by said PIN applicator; then,  
11 (e) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk; then,  
12 (f) registering said product by transmitting said vended PIN over a communications  
13 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 40: The method as recited in claim 39, in which said package includes a URL via  
2 which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said communications  
3 channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

- 4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said communications channel; and  
5 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;  
6 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said  
7 vended PIN over said communications channel, the steps of:  
8 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and  
9 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said  
10 communications channel via said URL.

1 41: The method as recited in claim 40, in which said step of registering said product  
2 further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said communications  
3 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 42: The method as recited in claim 39, in which said computer data storage apparatus  
2 is interfaced to said communications channel via audio recognition means, and said step of  
3 registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said vended PIN over  
4 said communications channel, the steps of:

- 5 (a) providing a telephone; and  
6 (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio  
7 recognition means over said communications channel;  
8 and said step of transmitting of said vended PIN over said communications channel is via  
9 said telephone to said audio recognition means.

1 43: The method as recited in claim 42, in which said telephone includes audio tone  
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic  
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said vended PIN over said  
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

- 5 (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic  
6 dialing tones representing said vended PIN; and  
7 (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic  
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1 44: The method as recited in claim 42, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,  
2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said communications channel includes the  
3 steps of:

- 4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and  
5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 45: A label for applying to a package, said label having an activation code thereon  
2 and said label comprising:

- 3 (a) a substrate having a PIN thereon;  
4 (b) a removable opaque covering applied to said substrate over and obscuring said  
5 PIN; and  
6 (c) an adhesive backing on said substrate.

1 46: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said activation code is on a top surface  
2 of said removable opaque covering.

1 47: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said removable opaque covering is a  
2 scratch-off opaque covering.

1 48: The label as recited in claim 47, in which said activation code is on a top surface  
2 of said removable opaque covering.

1 49: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said removable opaque covering is a  
2 peel-off opaque covering.

1 50: The label as recited in claim 49, in which said activation code is on a top surface  
2 of said removable opaque covering.